

P 271457Z FEB 03
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5287
INFO RWANDA COLLECTIVE
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
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CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 000477

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/31/2008
TAGS: PGOV PREL CG
SUBJECT: NEW BREED OF HARDLINERS INFLUENCES KABILA

REF: A. 2/25 E-MAIL HOOKS-BELLAMY/EASTHAM/AMADEO
 1B. KINSHASA 172
 1C. KINSHASA 447

CLASSIFIED BY: POLOFF EDWARD BESTIC FOR REASONS 1.5 B AND D

¶11. (C) SUMMARY: IN RECENT WEEKS GDRC PRESIDENT JOSEPH KABILA HAS APPROVED SEVERAL ACTIONS WHICH ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF A SLOW-BUILDING EVOLUTION TOWARDS HARDLINE POLICIES. "HAWKISH" ADVISERS SUCH AS AUGUSTIN KATUMBA, SAMBA KAPUTO AND EVARISTE BOSHAB HAVE GAINED THE ASCENDANCY OVER MORE "MODERATE" FIGURES SUCH AS VITAL KAMERHE, ANDRE KAPANGA AND THEOPHILE MBEMBA. KABILA HIMSELF IS NOT AN INNOCENT VICTIM IN THIS STORY. HE HAS NOW SURROUNDED HIMSELF WITH A NEW BREED OF HARDLINERS--NOT HIS FATHER'S CRONIES, BUT A YOUNGER, MORE SOPHISTICATED GROUP OF HAWKS. IN THE PAST, KABILA APPEARED TO SHOW GREATER APPRECIATION FOR THE LONGER-TERM CONSEQUENCES OF HIS CHOICES, IN PARTICULAR THE REACTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. THESE DAYS, HE IS TAKING HIS ADVISERS' ADVICE SEEMINGLY WITH LESS REGARD FOR THEIR BROADER IMPACT, AND APPEARS TO BE MOTIVATED BY A DESIRE TO STAY IN POWER. END SUMMARY.

INCREASING HARDLINE TENDENCIES

¶12. (C) OVER THE PAST YEAR, THERE HAVE BEEN SIGNS THAT KABILA HAS INCREASINGLY BEEN FAVORING THE VIEWS SHARED BY THE "HAWKS" AROUND HIM. IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS ALONE, THE GDRC HAS TAKEN SEVERAL ACTIONS IN LINE WITH THIS MODE OF THINKING. EXAMPLES INCLUDE THE ATTEMPT TO EXPEL CONGOLESE LIBERATION MOVEMENT (MLC) REPRESENTATIVES FROM KINSHASA IN JANUARY (REF B), THE FIRING OF THE FINANCE MINISTER MATANGULU IN FEBRUARY (REF C), AND, SINCE LATE 2002, THE DEPLOYMENT OF REGULAR GDRC TROOPS TO THE BENI-BUTEMBO REGION--PUTTING THEM BEYOND THE LUSAKA CEASEFIRE LINES.

¶13. (C) IN GENERAL, HARDLINERS TEND TO ESPOUSE THE BELIEF THAT TIME IS ON KINSHASA'S SIDE IN THE REUNIFICATION PROCESS, THAT THE OPPOSING BELLIGERENTS CAN BE OUTMANEUVERED, OUTLASTED, AND PERHAPS EVENTUALLY DEFEATED MILITARILY. INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE CAN BE FENDED OFF BY SIGNING AGREEMENTS IN SUN CITY AND PRETORIA, BUT ENOUGH OUTSTANDING DISPUTES (SUCH AS OVER SECURITY) REMAIN THAT KINSHASA CAN MANIPULATE WITHOUT APPEARING TO BE THE HOLDOUT. IN KEEPING WITH LONGTIME CONGOLESE POLITICAL NORMS AND PRACTICES, THESE ADVISERS ARE DOUBTLESS MOTIVATED IN NO SMALL PART BY A DESIRE TO KEEP THEIR JOBS AND THEIR ACCESS TO WEALTH AND POWER. DESPITE NATIONALIST RHETORIC--MODERATES ARE DENOUNCED AS "TRAITORS"--SOME MAY IN FACT PREFER TO RULE UNCHALLENGED IN PART OF THE COUNTRY RATHER THAN SHARE POWER WITH OTHERS IN A NEW NATIONAL GOVERNMENT.

WHO HAS KABILA'S EAR?

¶14. (C) OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS, KABILA HAS REPLACED A GREAT MANY OF THE "OLD GUARD" OF ADVISORS AND MINISTERS APPOINTED BY HIS FATHER. ONCE-POWERFUL INDIVIDUALS SUCH AS MWENZE KONGOLO, GAETAN KAKUDJI AND ABDOULAYE YERODIA HAVE LARGELY BEEN SIDELINED. (YERODIA OCCASIONALLY RESURFACES TO SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT IN HIS BAS-CONGO HOME REGION, AND HAS RECENTLY BEEN RUMORED--VERY SPECULATIVELY--AS A POSSIBLE GDRC VICE PRESIDENT.)

¶15. (C) AMONG THE NEWER BREED, THE MOST INFLUENTIAL "HAWKS"

APPEAR TO BE ON KABILA'S OWN PERSONAL STAFF: CABINET DIRECTOR EVARISTE BOSHAB, DEPUTY CABINET DIRECTOR SAMBA KAPUTO, AND PIERRE LUMBI, DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC STUDIES. PRESIDENTIAL SPOKESMAN MULEGWA ZIHINDULA, IN A 23 FEB. PRIVATE MEETING WITH THE AMBASSADOR, LEVELED CHARGES OF CORRUPTION AT ALL THREE OF THESE INDIVIDUALS.

--BOSHAB IS FROM KASAI, A LAW PROFESSOR BY TRAINING AND BACKGROUND, WHO HAD BEEN DEPUTY CABINET DIRECTOR UNTIL THE OCTOBER 2002 SHUFFLE.

--KAPUTO, WHO IS PERHAPS MORE INFLUENTIAL THAN BOSHAB ON POLICY MATTERS, WAS BORN IN KATANGA BUT RAISED IN THE KIVUS, AND IS A POLITICAL SCIENCE PROFESSOR BY TRAINING. GOVERNOR OF BANDUNDU AND ORIENTALE PROVINCES IN THE MOBUTU ERA, HE WAS VITAL KAMERHE'S DEPUTY AT THE GREAT LAKES PEACE COMMISSION UNTIL OCTOBER 2002, WHEN HE WAS TAKEN ON BOARD IN HIS CURRENT CAPACITY. HE IS CONSIDERED THE PROTEGE OF AUGUSTIN KATUMBA.

--LUMBI, FROM MANIEMA, WAS AN UNOFFICIAL ADVISER PRIOR TO OCTOBER 2002. AN EARLY CIVIL SOCIETY LEADER (HE FOUNDED A SELF-HELP NGO IN 1978 WHEN SUCH ORGANIZATIONS WERE STILL TECHNICALLY ILLEGAL), HE BECAME ETIENNE TSHISEKEDI'S FOREIGN MINISTER IN 1992-3 AND THEN POST & COMMUNICATIONS MINISTER IN THE KENGO WA DONDÖ GOVERNMENT.

¶6. (C) PERHAPS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THESE FORMAL ADVISERS IS AUGUSTIN KATUMBA, WHO WAS MINISTER OF THE PRESIDENCY UNTIL HE WAS SUSPENDED IN OCTOBER 2002 (FOLLOWING THE RELEASE OF THE UN PANEL REPORT ON PLUNDERING THE DRC'S RESOURCES). KATUMBA, LONG CONSIDERED KABILA'S RIGHT-HAND MAN, HAS BEEN ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN ALL INTER-CONGOLESE DIALOGUE NEGOTIATIONS SINCE SUN CITY. THIS HAS ENABLED HIM TO TRANSLATE THE HARDLINE VIEW INTO THE GDRC'S NEGOTIATING POSITIONS AT THE VARIOUS ROUNDS OF TALKS. CURRENT RUMOR HAS IT THAT HE MAY REPLACE JEAN MBUYU AS KABILA'S SPECIAL SECURITY ADVISOR AND CHIEF OF THE COMMITTEE FOR STATE SECURITY.

¶7. (C) REGARDING MILITARY MATTERS, HERETOFORE KABILA HAS LISTENED TO ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF, LIEUTENANT GENERAL LIWANGA MATA, AN EX-FAZ OFFICER. HOWEVER, HE ALSO LISTENS TO ARMY COMMANDER GENERAL FRANCOIS OLENGA AND AIR FORCE COMMANDER GENERAL JOHN NUMBI. OLENGA AND NUMBI ARE SIMILAR IN THAT THEY ARE BOTH POLITICAL APPOINTEES WITH NO PROFESSIONAL MILITARY BACKGROUND, HAVE VIOLENT STREAKS, AND ARE REPUTED TO BE CORRUPT. THE TWO ARE RIVALS, EACH VYING FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO TRAVEL ABROAD ON ARMS-BUYING TRIPS, WHICH ENABLES THEM TO SKIM OFF A PERCENTAGE OF ANY SALES TRANSACTION. THEY STAND TO LOSE SUCH OPPORTUNITIES AND PERHAPS EVEN THEIR JOBS IF THE VARIOUS BELLIGERENTS' ARMIES ARE MERGED.

¶8. (C) IN TERMS OF FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY, AS NOTED EARLIER THE FIRING OF FINANCE MINISTER MATANGULU SENT SHUDDERS THROUGH THE DONOR COMMUNITY. UNTIL RECENTLY, MATANGULU HAD SUFFICIENT INFLUENCE OVER KABILA THAT ENABLED THE FORMER TO "HOLD THE LINE" ON PUBLIC EXPENDITURES. HIS OUSTER--OVER THE ISSUE OF MAINTAINING FISCAL DISCIPLINE--HAS RAISED SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT THE GDRC'S INTENT TO ADHERE TO IFI-APPROVED ECONOMIC POLICIES. IT IS NOT CLEAR THAT THERE IS ANYONE LEFT AMONG KABILA'S CLOSE ADVISERS WHO IS PREPARED TO CARRY ON MATANGULU'S ROLE AND PROVIDE SOUND, IF UNPOPULAR, ADVICE ON ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL MATTERS. JEAN-CLAUDE MASANGU AS CENTRAL BANK GOVERNOR IS STILL MAINTAINING A STABLE MONETARY POLICY, HOWEVER THERE HAVE BEEN FREQUENT RUMORS THAT HE HIMSELF IS LESS THAN SQUEAKY CLEAN.

MODERATES, TAKING A BACK SEAT

¶9. (C) THOSE WHO PUBLICLY EXPRESS A MORE "MODERATE" VIEW APPEAR TO HAVE WANING INFLUENCE. SUCH FIGURES INCLUDE:

--THEOPHILE MBEMBA, CABINET DIRECTOR UNTIL OCTOBER 2002, SINCE THEN INTERIOR MINISTER, LED THE GDRC DELEGATION AT THE PRETORIA NEGOTIATIONS IN DECEMBER, BUT HAS NOT PLAYED A VISIBLE ROLE IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS SINCE.

--ANDRE KAPANGA, FORMERLY LAURENT KABILA'S PERMREP AT THE UN IN NEW YORK, CURRENTLY KABILA'S POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC ADVISER, HAS NOT TAKEN CHARGE OF HIS NEW BRIEF AND ALREADY HAS BEEN MARGINALIZED; HE WAS ILL-INFORMED ABOUT KEY DECISIONS SUCH AS THE ABORTIVE MLC EXPULSION ORDER.

--VITAL KAMERHE, LONGTIME CHIEF NEGOTIATORS IN THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PEACE PROCESSES, NOW PLAYS SECOND FIDDLE TO SAMBA KAPUTO IN THESE TALKS.

--MULEGWA ZIHINDULA, PRESIDENTIAL SPOKESMAN SINCE OCTOBER 2002, CLAIMS TO BE EAGER TO SEE REFORM BUT HAS NOT DEMONSTRATED SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE ON KABILA'S DECISIONS.

--LEONARD SHE OKITUNDU, FOREIGN MINISTER SINCE LAURENT KABILA'S TIME, CURRENTLY HAS VIRTUALLY NO SAY IN IMPORTANT MATTERS. HIS STAFF HAS COMPLAINED TO EMBOFFS SEVERAL TIMES IN RECENT MONTHS ABOUT BEING MARGINALIZED.

COMMENT

10. (C) OVER THE PAST YEAR, THERE HAS BEEN A SLOW BUT SIGNIFICANT EVOLUTION TOWARDS HARDLINE POLICIES ON THE PART OF THE GDRC. KABILA HIMSELF IS NOT AN INNOCENT VICTIM IN THIS STORY, HAVING APPOINTED THE VERY ADVISORS TO WHOM HE IS CURRENTLY LISTENING. HE HAS NOW SURROUNDED HIMSELF WITH A NEW BREED OF HARDLINERS--NOT HIS FATHER'S CRONIES, BUT A YOUNGER, MORE SOPHISTICATED GROUP OF HAWKS. IN THE PAST, KABILA APPEARED TO SHOW GREATER APPRECIATION FOR THE LONGER-TERM CONSEQUENCES OF HIS CHOICES, IN PARTICULAR THE REACTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. THESE DAYS, HE IS TAKING HIS ADVISERS' ADVICE SEEMINGLY WITH LESS REGARD FOR THEIR BROADER IMPACT, AND APPEARS TO BE MOTIVATED BY A DESIRE TO STAY IN POWER. END COMMENT.

HOOKS